



Dave Lambertson
Director

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
Internal Services Department
1100 North Eastern Avenue
Los Angeles, California 90063


To enrich lives through effective and caring service.



Telephone: (323) 267-2101
FAX: (323) 264-7135

March 9, 2006

To: Each Supervisor

From: Dave Lambertson
Director 

Subject: **STATUS REPORT – CONSOLIDATED FIRE/SHERIFF-OPS
COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM PROJECT (CFSCS)**

On November 29, 2005 your Board approved an agreement with RCC Consultants Inc. to develop a technical scope of work and evaluation tool for a Request for Proposal to acquire a Consolidated Fire/Sheriff-OPS Communications System (CFSCS).

At that time, Internal Services Department (ISD) was directed to work with the CAO to develop a task force to focus on the financing aspect of the CFSCS project, and to provide quarterly status reports to your Board on the project. Attached is the first quarterly report. CFSCS's Executive Committee (consisting of representatives from Sheriff/Office of Public Safety (OPS), Fire, CAO, CIO, and ISD) could not reach consensus regarding the content of this report. Sheriff and OPS will be providing your Board with a separate report. Key activities and issues include:

County Project

- RCC has delivered a final report, "Common Data Radio System Study", on recommended standards for data equipment. The CFSCS Executive Committee is considering RCC's recommendations in light of the short term, mid term and long term need for data communication systems for Los Angeles County public safety agencies. At this time, the departments represented by the CFSCS Executive Committee have not individually or collectively determined if they agree with the recommendations in RCC's report.
- RCC delivered a draft report on recommended standards to facilitate interim radio equipment purchases for voice equipment. The CFSCS Executive Committee is reviewing the report. A final report will be issued by the end of March, 2006.

- A Finance Task force has been established with representatives from ISD, CAO, Fire, Sheriff and OPS. The first meeting was held on February 28, 2006. The Task Force will be adding people with expertise in bond financing and grant applications.
- The CFSCS Executive Committee has drafted an agreement on the roles and responsibilities of the Sheriff, Fire, OPS, CAO, CIO, and ISD. Ultimately, these items will be finalized in a Memorandum of Understanding. In areas where consensus cannot be reached, the issues will be escalated for resolution.
- The process to obtain a contract resource to be the Project Manager is being reviewed by the CAO.
- On January 31, 2006 your Board approved additional positions for the Sheriff and OPS for the CFSCS and Interoperability projects.
- The CFSCS Executive Committee submitted a request to the CAO to obtain office space for the project. A request for approval of a lease agreement is planned for March 15, 2006.

Regional Interoperability Steering Committee (RISC)

In parallel with the County of Los Angeles CFSCS project, RCC completed a study mutually supported by the City of Los Angeles, County of Los Angeles and Los Angeles area public safety officials. This study focused on the feasibility of a regional communications system.

RCC's recommendation to build a regional system has a great deal of support in concept; however, issues such as governance, ownership, operational responsibility and cost allocation methodology still need to be determined. Furthermore, the implications of such a regional effort need further evaluation before a recommendation can be made on the County's participation in the project.

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MILESTONES FOR THE NEXT REPORTING PERIOD

Activities over the next three months will include:

- Finalize a position on RCC's data and voice standards recommendations.
- Complete a Task Force review of the financing options identified by RCC in a 2001 CFSCS Study.
- Obtain a contract project manager for CFSCS.
- Approve office space for the project.
- Continue working with the Regional Interoperability Steering Committee (RISC) and report progress in the next quarterly status report.

Please contact me or David Mayer, ISD Telecommunications Branch Manager, at (562) 940-2907 should you have any questions.

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Attachment

c: Chief Administrative Officer
Fire Chief
Sheriff
Chief, Office of Public Safety
Chief Information Officer
ISD Board Deputies
Justice Deputies

**Consolidated Fire, Sheriff/OPS Communication System (CFSCS)
Status Report for the Quarter Ending February 28, 2006**

Background

During September 2000, the Board of Supervisors approved an agreement with RCC Consultants Inc. to study the feasibility of developing a consolidated Fire and Sheriff Radio system. The Study was needed because both the Fire and the Sheriff Radio systems were aging, and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) had mandated a move to more efficient use of radio frequency spectrum. System replacements are needed to address the aging infrastructure as well as to meet the FCC mandate.

On November 29, 2005 the Board approved an agreement with RCC Consultants Inc. to develop a technical scope of work and evaluation tools for an RFP to acquire a Consolidated Fire/Sheriff-OPS Communications System (CFSCS).

At that time, ISD was instructed to work with the CAO to develop a task force to focus on the financing aspect of the CFSCS project, and to provide quarterly status reports to your Board on the project. Parallel to the County's efforts, there is also a Regional Study focused on the feasibility of developing a consolidated communications system for all public safety agencies within the entire Los Angeles County region.

This is the first quarterly report and it will provide information on:

- The Status of RCC's Work Related to the County's Consolidated Radio System
- The Finance Task Force
- Project Management and Administration
- Review of Regional System

STATUS OF RCC's WORK RELATED TO CFSCS RFP

RCC has completed a Common Data Radio System Study, a draft recommendation for interim voice radio purchases, and is currently engaged to develop an RFP for a Consolidated Radio System.

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Common Data Radio System Study

RCC delivered a report on January 26, 2006, which provides a recommendation for the County's next steps in the procurement of a common data radio system. The recommendations were based on several criteria including the ability to carry dispatch traffic, support large public agency users, provide reliable coverage, deliver messages in a timely manner and other operational and business considerations. At this time, the departments represented by the CFSCS Executive Committee have not individually or collectively determined if they agree with the recommendations in RCC's report.

A summary of RCC's recommendations follows:

RCC determined that no one vendor's solution was clearly superior. Several offerings could match the County's needs and recommends that the County develop a detailed set of specifications and release a competitive bid for a consolidated system. RCC wrote:

"After thoroughly evaluating the alternatives, no vendor is seen as a clear winner. It is RCC's opinion that each of the offerings has unique aspects that offer potential benefit to the County and that any of the alternatives evaluated could meet the needs of the County. It is RCC's recommendation that the best course of action, given the existing time constraint, is to request IPMobileNet, DataRadio, and Motorola submit offers to the County for an 800 MHz solution that includes a migration strategy to their 700 MHz solution. The vendor that offers the best package should then be contracted with to provide their solution."

RCC recommends the County move its 470/480 MHz (UHF) data systems in the interim to 800 MHz and ultimately transition to 700 MHz. RCC states the following in their report.

"Following this recommendation allows the County to best position itself for compatibility with other agencies in the area and defines a road map for the upgrading to the 700 MHz band, which is seen as a long term goal by most public safety agencies. As with any of the alternatives it does have some risks the most obvious include the acquisition of viable 800 MHz spectrum."

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RCC further recommends that if the transition to 700/800 MHz cannot be done in a timely manner, then the County may consider leasing services from a commercial wireless provider (i.e., as opposed to a UHF based upgrade). RCC states:

"Should this recommendation not be considered viable or the County determines that the process would take too long; RCC would recommend that if speed of implementation is the most critical factor, then the leased alternative should be implemented as an interim solution. This is deemed logical since it incurs the least upfront costs and allows for immediate action to take place. This would allow the County to bring the data network selection process into the Phase II process. While the scenario outlined in the report staggers the deployment for a number of years, the timeline could be accelerated if the County felt that was a significant issue.

This is [sic] alternative is recommended rather than proceed with any of the existing offers because of the lack of County defined specifications to hold any of the vendors accountable to during the implementation process. Without these specifications the process of determining if the County received the system it needs is prone to problems at best."

Recently, Congress and the President signed into law a Bill that mandates 700 MHz spectrum become available for public safety use in February 2009. RCC is recommending the 700/800 MHz spectrum because it allows a system to carry much more data at much higher speeds than is currently in use. This approach is also consistent with the proposed Regional System, which is discussed later in this report.

A significant milestone that must be reached by the CFSCS Executive Committee, should the RCC recommendation be adopted, will be to identify an efficient and timely methodology to transition from current 470/480 MHz (UHF) data systems that are in desperate need for replacement, to the recommended 700/800 MHz system.

This transition process is currently being explored by weighing the timeliness of an RFP for vendor response to the proposed solution versus the sole source procurement of an interim UHF mobile data solution for Sheriff-OPS that will transition to a 700 MHz system at a later date.

There are also some logistical issues that accompany the transition; specifically 800 MHz spectrum may need to be identified for utilization until the 700 MHz spectrum becomes available in 2009. The coverage aspects of 700/800 MHz also differ from UHF and may require the acquisition of additional radio sites.

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Voice Systems

RCC delivered a draft report on recommended standards for voice equipment on February 13, 2006. The CFSCS team is currently reviewing the report. A final report will be issued by March 15, 2006.

The voice recommendations are related to functionality and industry standards, some of which are evolving. The previously published plans to consolidate the Fire and Sheriff Voice systems fit very well with RCC's draft recommendations. It also appears to be compatible with a regional radio system if that is developed.

Development of an RFP

The bulk of the contract with RCC entailed the development of Request for Proposal for a consolidated system. Activities are proceeding and there are no major issues at this time.

FINANCE TASK FORCE

A Finance Task force has been established with finance and administrative representatives from ISD, CAO, Fire, Sheriff and OPS. The first meeting was held on February 28, 2006. In the near future, the Task Force will also be adding people with expertise in bond financing and grant applications.

A first area of focus will be to address the feasibility of the financing options discussed in the 2001 RCC report as well as brainstorming funding alternatives. Areas of discussion will include:

- Potential for Federal and State grants
- Budget allocations from the General Fund
- Bond/debt financing
- Private sector arrangements (e.g., long term agreement with radio vendors, etc.)

The task force will also develop language for inclusion in the project RFP that calls for alternative and creative financing options as requested by the Board.

It should be noted that the Finance Task Force's recommendations might be significantly impacted by what the County decides to do with the proposed Regional approach as discussed in a later Section of this report.

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PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

Project Executive Committee

A County Executive Committee consisting of representatives from the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), Chief Information Officer (CIO), the Sheriff, Fire Department, and the Office of Public Safety (OPS) and ISD has been established. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been drafted in order to set forth the goals, organization, and procedural guidelines for planning, design, conflict resolution, procurement, and implementation of a consolidated system. This MOU is now under review by members of the Executive Committee. Areas where consensus cannot be reached will be submitted to the respective department heads for their approval.

Engagement of a Project Manager

In November 2005, ISD issued a Request for Statement of Qualifications, based on requirements developed by the CFSCS Executive Committee, to engage a Project Manager for the project. The Project Manager will report to the CAO. The CAO is working to finalize the selection of a Project Manager.

Additional Project Resources

On January 31, 2006 the Board approved additional positions for the Sheriff and OPS for the CFSCS and Interoperability projects.

The CFSCS Executive Committee prepared a request to the CAO to obtain office space for the project. A request for approval of a lease agreement is planned for March 15, 2006.

RELATED PROJECTS

Regional Interoperability Steering Committee (RISC)

RCC Consultants Inc. has completed a study funded by the City of Los Angeles and County of Los Angeles with participation and input provided by the Contract Cities Association. This study focused on the feasibility of developing a regional communication (voice and data) system. The concept is similar to the County's consolidated radio system project except that it would involve the majority of public safety agencies within the geographical boundaries of the County of Los Angeles. Technical staff from the Sheriff, Fire and ISD is participating in the study. The CAO, the Fire Chief, the Sheriff and the ISD Director are participating on an Executive Steering Committee.

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RCC's recommendation is to build a consolidated regional system using:

- The 700/800 MHz spectrum as the regional standard for data.
- The UHF spectrum as the regional standard for voice.

RCC's preliminary findings indicate that a regional consolidated system presents many positive attributes, including: an opportunity to decrease overall system build-out costs (i.e., since infrastructure and frequency assets could be shared amongst agencies), enhance coverage and provide for greater interoperability within the Los Angeles County region. RCC's recommendation has a great deal of support in concept. However, many issues still need to be worked out before a recommendation can be made to the Board regarding County participation in the regional system. These include governance, asset ownership, operational and maintenance responsibility, a cost allocation methodology, as well as other issues.

The development of a regional system will require a close collaborative effort with the CFSCS initiative. Technical issues and considerations of a regional system will have a major impact to the design of the CFSCS system.

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